

By Tech. Sgt. Mark Munsey  
Kukini Managing Editor

The twelve members on each National Basketball Association League conference team won't be the only hoopsters on the court during the 2005 NBA All-Star weekend in Denver, Co., Feb 18 - 20.

The Jr. NBA/Jr. WNBA will select five boys and girls from across the country to participate in fun and games alongside their favorite NBA players.

Nimitz Elementary student Ashley Lopez, daughter of Yvonne and Tech. Sgt. Horace Lopez, 56th Air and Space Communications Squadron, has been selected from more than 600 entrants as one of

15 female finalists to potentially pack her Nikes and head to hoops heaven as part of the Jr. NBA/Jr. WNBA National Team.

"I want to meet

Shaquille O'Neal, he's my favorite player," said 11-year-old Lopez, who at 5' 2" tall played center and forward for the Hickam Lakers last season.

In her videotaped interview for the final cut down, Lopez talked about what lessons she has learned from participating in the Hickam Youth Sports Program.

Teamwork can help people help others improve their skills on the court, she said. It's also paid dividends once the final buzzer has ended the game.

"Teamwork has taught me to help mom take care of my younger brothers when my dad deploys," she said.

Also required on the tape was a demonstration of her basketball skills, including shooting, dribbling and defensive leg work.

It was those very skills that served her well during last season's schedule, often in uniquely trying situations, according to Debbie O'Donnell, Laker's coach.

"It's a coed league," Coach O'Donnell said. "Often times, like against Schofield Barracks, she'd be the only girl on the court." Not only did she survive, she thrived and dominated the competition, averaging 13 points and close to 20 rebounds a game.

It's not just her on-court prowess that has set Lopez apart and deserving of her selection for the all-star prize, according to a recommendation letter written by Lisa Cazimero, her sixth grade teacher.

Among Ashley's many accomplishments are:

- Junior Parole Officer Captain
- Nimitz News For Kids Editor
- Eagle of the month

# All-Star POTENTIAL

## A Hickam youth among 15 national finalists in professional basketball prize competition

- Honor roll
- Artwork selected for cover of school year-book

It's those leadership qualities that the competition selection committee is looking to reward, according to Keith Johnson, competition coordinator.

"For the last five years this program was designed to recognize special youngsters who excel on the court, in the classroom and in the local community," Mr. Johnson shared.

Both teams will compete against local same-age-group all stars during All-Star Saturday night, sandwiched in-between such popular NBA events as the rookie game and the slam dunk competition.

Regardless of her selection, Lopez is already a winner based on her attitude, her dad believes.

"We feel competition is always a good experience," Sergeant Lopez said "Ashley's willingness to work makes her a great team player, which is what we always talk about in our household."

The competition winners will be announced January 17.

For more information on the Hickam Youth Programs, contact BJ Bentley, Hickam Youth Sports director, at 448-6611.



Photo by  
Mark Bates



Photo by Tech. Sgt. Mark Munsey

(Left) Ashley Lopez is interviewed by BJ Bentley, Hickam Youth Sports director, for her application for the contest.



Photo by Mark Bates

Above left: Ashley Lopez scores a hoop for the videotaped contest application. Above: Ashley Lopez scores over brother Michael, 9, and father Horace.

# Supplements promise results, pose risks

By Army Sgt. Frank Magni  
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**BAGRAM AIR BASE, AFGHANISTAN (AFPN)**—The path to fitness, weight loss and nutrition requires discipline and hard work, but many are turning to supplements to find a faster route to these goals, health officials said. Easily purchased over-the-counter, many supplements promise an extra edge. But with their promises come potential long- and short-term side effects, along with the extra expense.

Still an under-regulated industry, supplements make certain claims that are in many ways unfounded, said Dr. (Lt. Col.) Brent Smith, an emergency room doctor for the 325th Combat Support Hospital here.

"For many of these supple-

ments there is still no scientific evidence they will perform as advertised," said Dr. Smith.

Along with making claims that aren't substantiated by science, supplements also lack study into the undesired side effects.

"Within the supplemental food and nutrition industry, many times you don't know what you're taking," said Dr. Smith. "There is still limited scientific study into the long- and short-term side effects (of) many over-the-counter supplements."

While there is little support for many of the positive claims of supplement companies, there are ample studies that reveal the negative effects of some, he said.

Dr. Smith said many people think supplements are safe because companies call their products all-natural.

"All-natural does not imply safety," he said. "There are many natural ingredients that can be very harmful to your health. We do know that long term over-use of vitamin A causes kidney damage."

"Huge protein load can also cause kidney and liver damage," he said of some of the common contents of dietary supplements.

And while many servicemembers are turning to supplements to reach desired effects with their body, many of them are ignoring simple solutions.

"There is no replacement for a balanced diet," said Spc. Brian Messner, 325th CSH nutritionist. "If you need to lose weight or even build muscle, there are many ways to achieve these goals through diet."

Specialist Messner said he sees

many servicemembers getting their nutrition advice from the wrong people.

"Just because you meet a guy in the gym who has (had) positive effects from taking a supplement, this doesn't mean it will have the same effects for you," said Specialist Messner. "Each person is different. Factors like age, gender, weight and even ethnic background can have different effects for the same supplement."

Both Dr. Smith and Specialist Messner recommend a person should consult a doctor if he or she insists on taking supplements, not a friend or gym buddy.

For some supplements, this is a requirement. Supplements containing the ingredient Androstenedione, which are currently available over-the-counter, will soon be available only by

prescription. Effective Jan. 20, it will be illegal to possess any supplement containing Androstenedione without a prescription from a doctor.

In addition to consulting a doctor, people should do their own research into the specific supplement, Specialist Messner said. Research should include reading and strictly following the label of each supplement.

"Taking twice the recommended dosage won't double the effect," he said. "In fact, overuse can be very dangerous."

Another important element in supplement use is proper hydration.

"In addition to taking proper dosage, hydration is one of the most important things when taking supplements," said Dr. Smith. The doctor reminds people that

while proper diet and exercise will ultimately yield the best results for anybody trying to improve their health, there are some ways supplements can help.

Taking a multi-vitamin can help some people compensate for what they don't get from eating.

"A simple once-a-day vitamin makes empirical sense if you don't have a diverse diet," Dr. Smith said.

While the path to weight loss and the perfect body through supplements offers many benefits, Specialist Messner said, it is important to pay attention to overall health.

"Many supplements help people achieve short-term goals," he said. "If you are really serious about your goals, supplements will only play a small part of your success."